THE EXTENSION HORTICULTURIST

January 1, 1924.

To teach the people who dwell on farms and in rural communities how to live more happy and contented lives is the worthy purpose of the Cooperative Extension Work. Perhaps nothing can so greatly contribute to this end as the home orchard and vegetable garden together with the small fruits and plenty of flowers. The contents of this number are intended as suggestions to the workers who plan home orchard, home garden and landscape campaigns.

We wish you all a happy, prosperous and successful new year. - Editors.

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The Home Orchard and Vegetable Garden.

Realizing the value of the home orchard, the small fruit plantings and the home vegetable garden as a means for improving the variety and diet of the farm family, we believe that the horticultural specialists should emphasize these lines of demonstration work. Several of the states have already made splendid progress with their home orchard and farm garden projects. These have often led to important commercial plantings. It is not with the idea of developing the commercial industry, however, that we are suggesting campaigns to increase interest in production of an adequate supply of fruits and vegetables for home use.

We are glad to note that sentiment is slowly turning toward demonstration work in the home orchard in some of the states which formerly stuck close to demonstration work in commercial orchards only. There is need for more and more work each year to save the existing home orchards which are worth saving, and to start hundreds of new ones in non-commercial counties. The statement that farmers will buy fruit from those who make a business of growing it does not work out in practice. A comparatively few will, but the great majority will not, and it is the majority we should work for. If for no other reason than from a dietary standpoint, and this is the greatest reason of all, we should push home orchard work vigorously. The farmer must have a living so let us help make that living as good as possible.

We will not all agree on the size of the home orchard nor of the number of trees it should contain. However, let us all boost for a home orchard of some kind and let the size of it be of secondary consideration just now.

A distinction has been made between the home orchard and the farm orchard as follows: The home orchard is one only large enough to produce fruit for the family, and the farm orchard is one that supplies the family and a surplus to sell. Some farm orchards are semi-commercial and very profitable.

As a basis for consideration let us suggest where the following fruits succeed, 10 apple trees, 3 pear trees, 3 peach trees, 3 plum trees, 2 sweet cherries, 3 sour cherries, and 2 quinces. These are to be of varieties covering a long season. The varieties and kinds must also be selected to suit the climate. The county agent and fruit specialist are competent to give advice as to kinds of fruit and varieties to plant.

Home Orchard Week.

In non-commercial fruit counties where home orchards should be developed, active interest can be aroused by designating a week as "Home Orchard Week." During this week new home orchards should be planted and old ones cleaned up. Begin the advertising and propaganda 6 to 8 weeks in advance of the week selected. The fruit specialist and county agent should prepare the advertising and propaganda material. Have the bankers and merchants advertise this particular week by placards in windows and in other ways. Have the county papers boost Home Orchard Week and run one series of

articles on new home orchards and one on established home orchards. In one series have them discuss the soil, the site, the plan, the varieties, the way to prune the tree roots before planting and the tops after planting, also the general care of young trees. In the other series have them discuss pruning, spraying and care of older trees. Through the county school superintendent arrange for a paragraph or two on some phase of home orcharding to be read in school by the teacher each morning that week. Get community and fraternial organizations to back the movement. Let all effort be directed toward a rousing week in home orchard planting and cleaning up those already established. The time for putting on a home orchard campaign of this character will vary somewhat with locality but it should be held just before the opening of spring weather and when pruning, dormant spraying, tree planting and other operations connected with the planting of a new home orchard or the renovation of an old one may be best demonstrated.

Acre Orchards.

Several of the states are making a success of acre orchards. Kansas has 100 or more of them. South Carolina has more than that number and Georgia has a great many. As a means of paving the way for the commercial peach industry in sections favorable to peach growing these southern states have demonstrated with acre blocks that peaches would succeed.

The acre orchard is too large for a home orchard. If it can be sprayed and cared for and the surplus fruit sold to advantage, it is well worth while. In an acre orchard, there are usually 30 to 40 apple trees. In a comparatively few years with good care the trees will be producing from 3 to 5 bushels each. This will mean a surplus of 50 bushels of apples or more to be disposed of. The spray ring is especially applicable in the care of acre orchards.

Small Fruits and Permanent Vegetables.

Time is a factor in the planting and bringing into bearing of a home orchard and the sooner the work is started the earlier in the life of the owner will results be obtained. Here is where the small fruits fit into the scheme and give results within a year after a beginning is made. First of all should be considered the strawberry which is adapted to a very wide range of territory. Second should be considered the raspberry in the sections where climatic conditions are favorable for its growth. Dewberries, blackberries and grapes may be grown over a wide range and require very little attention. Recent improvement of the blueberry renders it desirable for localities having acid soils such as are found all along the Atlantic Coast. Great progress is being made in the improvement of the small fruits especially by way of adapting them to a wider range of territory, increasing their productiveness and the development of the long season or everbearing strains. State specialists can do much to further the planting of the various small fruits by supplying information regarding the kinds and varieties adapted to the various localities and conditions.

Facts Worth Knowing about Home Gardens.

According to the Census figures taken in 1919, farm gardens were reported by 5,090,293 farms, or 78.9 per cent of all farms in the United States. The value of the products of these farm gardens amounted to

$344,665,728, an average value of $68.00 per farm reporting. Among the states, West Virginia stood highest with 92.6 per cent of the farms reporting farm gardens while Arizona and California were lowest with 31.5 per cent. West Virginia, Virginia, Delaware and Pennsylvania exceeded 90 per cent of the farms reporting gardens. Twenty-one states reported between 80 and 89.9 per cent having gardens.

In five states the total value of the products of the farm gardens exceeded $15,000,000, as follows: Texas, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Ohio and Missouri. The average value of the products of the farm garden per farm reporting was over $100.00 in seven states, as follows: Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, West Virginia, New Hampshire and Connecticut. West Virginia is in the leading class both as to percentage of farms reporting and in the value of its individual gardens.

The money value of the products of farm gardens is extremely difficult to ascertain as records are seldom kept and we are compelled to resort mainly to estimates. The average value of $68.00 for all farm gardens in the United States as included in the report of the Census taken in 1919, is undoubtedly high. These figures were obtained at a time of inflated market prices and the general average index prices are now much lower. It is doubtful, however, if the average farm owner reporting would take into consideration the full amounts or quantities of the various vegetables produced. It is a safe comparison when it is stated that one-half acre in vegetables, if properly planned, planted and cared for will produce more of the family living than any 3 acres on the farm devoted to general farm crops. There is only two other sources of good living that equal the garden and these are a good cow and a flock of poultry. For real pleasure the small fruits and the home orchard must be included in the combination, but why not complete the combination and live at home.

The above may suggest to some of the state horticultural specialists that they drop around and talk things over with the poultry and dairy specialists before making definite plans for an orchard or garden campaign. While we would not under most conditions advocate a joint campaign there are so many points of contact that should be taken into condideration that it pays to get together. Close cooperation should also be arranged with the nutrition specialists and the home demonstration agents.

Garden Day.

In a number of states there is proclaimed annually what is termed "Garden Day" on which everyone having land suitable for a garden is asked to begin the work of preparing and planting it. In some cases demonstrations are staged showing how to properly prepare and plant a garden.

The Garden Seed Situation.

Considerable attention has recently been given the matter of so planning the home garden as to produce the required quantities of the various vegetables without unnecessary waste. While this idea is commendable, it is as a rule easier to grow a reasonable surplus and thus insure a plentiful supply. Vegetables grown in farm gardens during the past have to a certain degree been wasted, and as we see it, it is no serious matter if in the future a surplus is grown and some of it goes to waste, provided the family is fully supplied at all seasonable times. The only

place where we would suggest careful conservation is in the matter of seeds and even there the argument for economy may be carried too far.

Reports upon the seed situation for 1924 indicate that the stocks of most vegetable seeds in the hands of seedsmen are much greater this year than during previous years. Glancing over the list as contained in the December 22 number of "Weather, Crops and Markets," it will be noted that the production of snap beans for seed purposes in 1923 was 28,000,000 pounds as compared with 19,000,000 pounds in 1922. Garden pole beans are about the same as last year or around 4,000,000 pounds. Lettuce shows a decided reduction, being 380,000 pounds as compared with 856,000 pounds in 1922. Muskmelon seed shows an increase over 1922, while watermelon seed production has decreased. Cucumber seed shows a decided gain. Onion seed is 935,000 pounds as compared with 450,000 for 1922. Onion sets 23,000,000 pounds as compared with 30,000,000 pounds for 1922. Garden peas are given as 66,000,000 pounds as compared with 46,000,000 pounds in 1922. Sweet corn shows little change, being about 8,825,000 pounds. Tomato seed shows a decided decrease, being 150,000 pounds as compared with 230,000 pounds in 1922. The significant gains are in snap beans, onion seed, cucumber seed and garden peas. In view of the high prices of bean and pea seed during the past two or three years the increased production of these will undoubtedly afford some relief. The price of such seeds as carrot, celery, lettuce, melons and tomato are not so important as a relatively small quantity of each are required for planting in the home garden.

Permanent Vegetables.

Under the term "Permanent" vegetables are included those perennials that require planting but once in several years. Asparagus and rhubarb are the leading permanent garden vegetables and should be included in the garden plan wherever they will thrive. Asparagus can be grown in almost any part of the country while rhubarb does best in the sections where the ground freezes to a considerable depth during the winter. The recent development of the Washington or rust resistant strains has added greatly to the value of asparagus as a home garden vegetable. In one or two of the states asparagus clubs have been started among the boys. While rhubarb may not be entirely successful in the Southern States, it will pay many of the southern home gardeners to procure roots from the north and renew their plantings frequently.

The permanent vegetables are not so important for the south where at least two vegetable crops can be kept growing every month in the year. Just at present the specialists in Mississippi have a contest under way in which 5,000 white and 5,000 colored gardeners, or 10,000 in all, are attempting to have at least two vegetables growing for home use every month in the year. These are known as "All-year" gardens and are conducted under the direction of the home demonstration agents.

Garden Cities.

A unique plan has been adopted by the Mississippi people to interest the boys of the schools in gardening. The plan is fostered by the Rotary and the Kiwanis clubs of the cities and towns. A tract of land is secured, plowed, fertilized and divided into plots 12 feet square with paths between the plots. The boys are called together and organized on the

city plan with one of their number as mayor, another as chief of police, another as commissioner of paths and walks and so on representing every branch of city government. In case of a vacancy in any of the offices an election is held to fill the vacancy. The work is handled under the direction of a competent leader and outside of school hours. The boys are required to work in their gardens certain definite periods and at the end of the season are awarded substantial prizes. The plan has wonderful possibilities as a means of interesting town boys in gardening.

Landscape Demonstrations.

Improvement of the home surroundings, including the establishment of a good lawn, the planting of a little shrubbery about the house and borders, and the growing of a supply of flowers is essential to the complete rounding out of the living program. In several of the states the calls for landscape work on farms have become so numerous as to make this feature of the horticultural extension work very important and popular. Landscape work divides itself into about three classes, that which is designed to demonstrate the best methods of improving farm home surroundings, that for the improvement of the surroundings of country churches and schools and that for the general civic improvement, including parks and plantings around public buildings. The idea that improvement of school grounds will serve as a demonstration for farmsteads is erronious and it has been found necessary to conduct type demonstrations on farms in the various communities in order to induce the farmers to improve their surroundings. School ground demonstrations have a value in the community if accompanied by demonstrations upon at least two or three farms. In some states this is done through the county agents, but in many others through the home demonstration agents. One idea that should always be emphasized is the use of local or native material in so far as practical. The number of community or type demonstrations should be determined by local circumstances. One point is to so locate the demonstration that it will be seen frequently by those who most need its influence. Landscape demonstrations need not always be completed in every detail but may consist of the establishment of a lawn and the planting of one or two shade trees and a few shrubs about the foundation of the house. Later the same demonstration can be carried to completion. As a rule, when a start is made in a community other members of the community will take the matter up and a general improvement will result. In connection with the improvement of the home surroundings, the question of location or re-location of any walks or drives should first be considered. Frequently the problem involves the help of a rural engineer in the matter of locating water supplies, drains, etc., all of which should be planned for in advance of the actual landscape work. This, however, need not delay the actual development of the planting plan.

Publicity.

Publicity and spreading the influence throughout the community in order that the demonstrated practice may be adopted by the largest possible number of persons is the primary object of the entire campaign whether it be for home orchards and gardens or for all phases of home improvement. This publicity should be arranged for in advance. In fact, a certain amount of publicity is essential at the beginning. In a number of the states attention has been called to the progress of the demonstration

during the time that it was being conducted by means of timely articles in the local papers and also by attractive signs mounted along the roadside. Farmers sometimes object to having signs erected on their premises,but where this can be done it is a splendid way of calling attention to a demonstration. Meetings are effective when there is something really worth while to show in connection with demonstrations. There should not, however, be a demonstration meeting called unless there is something worth while to show. The old saying that "seeing is believing" certainly applies to demonstration work.

Field tours by means of which a considerable number of people from other communities are brought to see a number of successful demonstrations are an effective way of gaining publicity. Exhibits at fairs are also very effective if they consist of but one main idea graphically presented. Local or community exhibits including both fresh and canned products of the home orchards and gardens are a splendid means of stimulating interest but the success of these exhibits depend largely upon the prizes that are offered. One point that should be emphasized in all publicity work in connection with the home orchard and home garden is the desirability of the farmer producing the greater portion of his living at home. The farmer can have the luxuries of a living if he will devote a little time to their production. The old argument so often presented that it is cheaper to purchase from commercial growers is seldom justified and as a matter of fact he does not take the trouble and his family go without the necessary fresh fruits and vegetables.

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The Passing of Mr. T. A. Farrand.

Fruit extension work in Michigan has sustained a severe loss in the death of Mr. T. A. Farrand, which occurred on December 12, last. Although not a college trained man, Mr. Farrand spent his life in growing fruit and had a clear grasp of the fundamentals of fruit extension work. He inaugurated the fruit fertilizer demonstrations in Michigan which form one of the big pieces of demonstration work in this country. Michigan has lost a good fruit extension man.

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With this issue of the Horticulturist, we begin a new year with its problems and its triumphs. A few changes have taken place among horticultural extension workers, but on the whole there has been less shifting about during the past year than formerly. One of the leaders, Prof. H. F. Tompson of Massachusetts, has resigned to devote his attention to his own truck farm near Providence, Rhode Island. We regret to loose Prof. Tompson from the extension work but wish him every success in his chosen work. The editors of the Horticulturist desire to express their appreciation of the splendid cooperation on the part of the State Specialists and wish all a happy, contented, successful new year.

W. R. Beattie,
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Extension Horticulturists.